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Erfahrungsbericht Auslandsstudium

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Ja
- 2) **Darf auf Anfrage eines interessierten Viadrina-Studierenden Ihr Erfahrungsbericht samt Ihrer Kontaktdaten an diese/n weitergegeben werden?**
Ja
- 3) **Bitte bestätigen Sie, dass Sie im Erfahrungsbericht nicht direkt die Namen dritter Personen (Dozierende/-r, Vermietende/-r) aufführen.**
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Ja, ich bestätige, dass alle Fotos meine eigenen sind.

Es würde uns freuen, wenn Sie auf folgende Punkte eingehen (der Bericht sollte mindestens 2 Seiten haben, für die maximale Anzahl an Seiten gibt es keine Begrenzung):

- **Vorbereitung** (Empfehlungen zur Planung, was ist zu beachten z.B. ggf. für Visa, Versicherung, Anreisemöglichkeiten? Wie sah die Bewerbung an der Gasthochschule aus? Gab es Einführungsveranstaltungen an der Gastuni? Waren diese verpflichtend und zu welchem Datum fanden Sie statt? Gab es ein Tutoren/Buddy-Angebot?)
- **Unterkunft** (Wie haben Sie eine Unterkunft gefunden? Haben Sie Tipps dazu, z.B. was vermieden werden sollte? Gab es Studierendenwohnheime? Mietkosten? Welche Wohngegend würden Sie empfehlen?)
- **Studium an der Gasthochschule** (Wie sah der Unialltag aus? Anwesenheitspflicht? Welche Kurse haben Sie belegt? Durften Sie Kurse verschiedener Fakultäten wählen? Link zu den Kurslisten der Partneruni. Wie laufen die Prüfungen ab? Wurden Sprachkurse angeboten? Wie fanden Sie die Uni allgemein und das Betreuungsangebot für Austauschstudierende?)
- **Alltag und Freizeit** (Wie hoch sind die Lebenshaltungskosten insgesamt, bzw. wie viel Geld sollte monatlich zur Verfügung stehen? Kosten und Tipps bzgl. der öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel? Freizeit- Sportangebote?)
- **Fazit** (schlechteste und beste Erfahrung)
- **Verbesserungsvorschläge/Feedback** (Wie können wir, Ihrer Meinung nach, unsere Austauschprogramme verbessern, z.B. bezgl. der Beratung, gewährter Informationen, des Bewerbungsverfahrens an der Viadrina?) – Dieser Abschnitt soll der Abteilung für Internationale Angelegenheiten der Viadrina als Feedback dienen und wird nicht veröffentlicht.

It is always better to start preparing ahead, but with Groningen, it was indeed essential. I learned about the housing problem after applying to RUG – reading the feedbacks ahead is one of the first things I would suggest to everyone. I also got to know some people who did an exchange at the same university and collected some information about the city. Students have to add themselves to all Facebook housing groups from day one and be applying 3-4 months ahead. Otherwise, it turns out to be a nightmare. Indeed, not paying attention to the housing can be crucial and take away a few weeks at the beginning of your semester best case.

The university also offers some housing for students a few months before the semester starts and should be considered as a good option, even though being quite pricy compared to the room in a normal WGs. Here one should also be fast, as the rooms from SHH (booking.sshxl.nl) get booked just in a few days after being published. In case neither of both works out, there are also prepaid websites where one could search for housing, which guarantee a quick solution neither.

There is also an emergency housing provided by the university for the first few weeks to give the student another opportunity to find a permanent place. One should be aware of that, but all in all, it is more than realistic to find a cozy place with an average rent of 400 euro/month.

Groningen is just 7-8 hours away from Berlin. Therefore, it is convenient to get oneself prepared by going there and looking for a room/ flat before the beginning of the semester. If not a car, then Flixbus and Blablabus are the best traveling options spotted.

If you have enough time and go there before the semester, the chances to get a room or flat double. The viewings are more popular here than Skype interviews. I was happy to find a flat online, but it took a while. I also traveled there twice before the beginning of the semester, to organize my things and prepare everything for a smooth start.

A Visa application might also be tricky. It was so to me, as the Intra-EU Mobility directive is relatively new, and not all requirements to fit under the conditions are precise. Moreover, they can be different from country to county. In 2019 the application process was for free, but the requirements were quite strict, as they want you to provide the proof of sufficient funds for a year instead of actual one semester of a stay. Nevertheless, the International Office of RUG gives excellent support in this process for all the students, and they indeed provided all the information about the study/housing/visa ahead and with great detail. They were also always ready to assist in all the possible issues.

All the introduction week was beneficial in choosing the courses and getting along at the campus. One cannot skip it, as one should cooperate with a study advisor to make the first academic steps done. The advisor would consider all the choices with you and indeed partly influence the selection of courses. Not all of them are opened for the exchange students; some of them cannot offer enough places. It should be an encounter that not all pre-selected courses can be taken. There are two blocks in the semester. The courses can be considered for the bloc A/B or the whole semester. All the classes I have taken were outstanding and exciting.

There is also a Dutch Studies course offered for all international students. It included different weekly lectures with varying teachers from entirely different fields of studies – would it be gas extraction in the city of Groningen, gender studies, or the theater in the Netherlands.

Language is charming and fun to learn. Unfortunately, the university has free language courses only for regular students. Otherwise, the language center seems to offer all the possible levels and languages. They're also free learning events like language café and tandems that start already from the first week of the semester. There are also free lectures on different subjects from the organization called Studium Generale that take place a few times a month.

We had lots of events that helped us get to know the city and university better, get to know the faculty members and other fellow students. There are too many events to manage all of them, but they will indeed prepare you well for the study process. RUG University has excellent teachers, but it is also quite hard to keep up with the amount of work for one course. The university has some fantastic spots for work, included few libraries – the central one and the one at the Zernike Campus are the most popular around the students. During the exam time, there is a huge line before the library – the students here seem to prefer studying there rather than home.

The student card gives you access to the coffee machines, printer and it can also be used as a gym card. One should apply a photo via the student portal to get the card. I would suggest doing it before the arrival, as it takes two weeks to get one.

I would strongly recommend the ACLO sports club. All of the students are actively enrolled in sports clubs and doing different classes. ACLO offers a membership for a relatively small contribution. One can take scuba diving or a healthy eating course. It can be squash or horse riding, volleyball, or combat. There are scheduled classes as well as some courses that you can enroll yourself to every five weeks. It is indeed an enriching experience to pick up the sport, get fit, or socialize.

The bike would also be one of the main things to get from the begging. It will let you be mobile and efficient and save you some time from the very beginning. There are plenty of groups where you can overtake a bike or other things from the students who are leaving. Groningen seems to be very vibrant and international in this sense. With the two prominent universities – RUG and Hanze – the student community is indeed durable and supportive. It is easy to get on well with people around here.

Vibrant student life with balanced study and free time, meaning sports and indeed lots of cycling, was the best experience for me. It lets me organize myself better and keep the “old” habits of being more productive after coming back to Germany. The Dutch academic culture is remarkable, and I got lots of tricks and tips from it. The living costs is also one of the pluses – they did not differ too much from my budget in Germany.

There was no bad experience around my stay. Preparation was a bit exhausting, but I seemed to forget about it straight away. The experience was challenging, there were lots of studies in every day, but it was exceptionally good idea to spend my exchange in Groningen.

One should take care of one's bike. It can become a negative experience in case it gets broken or stolen. The repair costs are quite high, in case you do not know the right shop. But again, there are lots of peers around you can ask for a piece of good advice.

(International Office provided excellent help and outstanding support in my case. This experience would not be possible without you! Thanks, so much for your great job, and keep it the same way!)